

**ROLES OF NGOS IN OPEN WATER FISHERIES RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN BANGLADESH:
EXPERIENCES OF CBFM PROJECT**

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the roles of non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in improving the status of open water fisheries resources in Bangladesh. NGOs are traditionally involved mostly in micro-credit operations as they are highly experienced and skilled in this area, but they have not been largely involved in natural resources management activities. With the introduction of “Community Based Fisheries Management” (CBFM) project by WorldFish Center in 1995 (Ford Foundation funding), some selected NGOs directly started to work in managing water bodies for fisheries management. The CBFM project aims to harness the partner non-government organizations’ (PNGOs) capability to promote more sustainable and equitable community-based management of fisheries. Overall, these partner non-government organizations (PNGOs) worked in 19 sites in the first phase and it improved fishing community empowerment, fisheries management, and equity in distribution of benefits. The second phase of this project was started in September 2001 (Department for International Development - DFID funding), for 5-years and involved 11 PNGOs and The Department of Fisheries (DoF) for implementing its activities in about 115 Water Bodies (WBs) in 19 districts of Bangladesh. Several positive impacts have already been visible. These are, improvement of inland fisheries management, providing livelihoods, employment and Income Generating Activity (IGA) opportunities to over 20,000 poorer fishing households, social mobilization, women empowerment, social awareness raising, and in particular assisting and facilitating access of organized groups of poor fishers to decision making over the water bodies (WBs). However, many challenges are still there in developing the capacity of the PNGOs to sustainably improve the livelihoods of poor people in CBFM project.

Key words: Non-Government Organizations, Sustainable and equitable community based fisheries management, Income generating activity, Livelihoods of poor people, Social mobilization, Women empowerment, Social awareness raising, Poor fishers’ decision making.

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh has one of the richest fishery resources in South Asia. Fish contribute about 60% of animal protein consumed in Bangladesh. The four million ha of openwaters in Bangladesh contribute about 42% of total fish production. It has been estimated that fisheries provided income for 1.5 million full-time fishers and 12 million part-time fishers. About 80% of rural households traditionally catch fish for consumption or to sell. The inland openwater fisheries of Bangladesh are common property and share two characteristics: it is costly to exclude potential users from gaining access to the resources; and each person's use of the resource subtracts from the potential welfare of others. Any solutions involve control of access to these fisheries and some form of institutional design to regulate use and minimise the subtractability problem. Exclusion is a serious problem, which may be addressed through defined areas where user groups or communities have exclusive fishing rights, or through licenses. Subtractability is addressed through rules, which limit short-term individual interests in favour of long term collective interest. The *community-based approach* is based on the principle that fishing communities are best able to set such rules and institutions, that they will then follow, and aims to enable and facilitate this (Technical Assistance Project Proforma, January 2001, CBFM-2, page-2).

Most open water fisheries are public property, and the Government's approach has been to lease out fishing rights for 1-3 years to private or co-operative entities who thereby acquire exclusive rights to determine fishing access to the waterbody. These leaseholders usually allow as many fishers and collect as much as rent (toll) as possible during the tenure of their lease. The Protection and Conservation of Fish Act, 1950, arose from Government concern to protect long-term collective interest, but its enforcement has been very weak and compliance is equally poor in the absence of any co-operation from both leaseholders and fishers (Technical Assistance Project Proforma, January 2001, CBFM-2, page-2).

Open water fisheries in Bangladesh are complex systems. Rivers, floodplains and beels share common fish stocks, and fishing communities exploit these wider systems. Localized community-based management has so far had short-term success, mainly in beels.

In this context, some projects have been developed in Bangladesh in order to address the crucial issues in the open water fisheries sector. The most important such projects are, DFID funded Community Based Fisheries Management Project (CBFM) Phase-2, World Bank-DFID funded Fourth Fisheries Project (FFP) and United States International Development (USAID) funded Management of Aquatic Ecosystems through Community Husbandry (MACH) Project etc. Of these three, CBFM-2 project can be highlighted as one of the successful development projects in Bangladesh in terms of open water fisheries resources management in Bangladesh.

NGOs in Bangladesh are the key players in development in many sectors, especially in micro-credit operations from its very beginning, 1972, i.e. since the completion of liberation war in 1971, when Bangladesh was born as a new nation and occupied its place in the global map.

ORIGIN OF COMMUNITY- BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT (CBFM)

The origin of this project can be traced to 1986 and the start of the New Fisheries Management Policy (NFMP) which was designed to direct access and benefits from openwater fisheries to poor "genuine" fishers by transferring waterbodies to Department of Fisheries (DOF) which would permit fishing by issuing licenses. Ford Foundation supported the Department of Fisheries in the "Improved Management of Openwater Fisheries (IMOF) Project to work on pilot implementation of this policy with technical support from International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM), now called, WorldFish Center, four NGOs joined the project. Experience from IMOF indicated significant advantages in collaboration between NGOs and DOF, as the NGOs facilitated organising of fishers for collective management. However, licensing gave limited benefits, it diverted resources into listing "genuine" fishers and failed to reduce the influence of traditional leaseholders and moneylenders (Technical Assistance Project Proforma, January 2001, CBFM-2, page-2).

This led to a more flexible community-based approach which strengthened NGO involvement through the CBFM Project (hereafter referred to as "CBFM- 1 "). ICLARM has played a leading role by providing technical and research support to CBFM-1. CBFM-1 involved DOF and NGOs jointly promoting sustainable use of openwater fisheries. The Ford Foundation provided direct grants to the partner organisations: DOF, ICLARM and three national NGOs (Caritas, Proshika and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee- BRAC) and two other NGOs (Banchte Sheka and Centre for Rural and Environment Development - CRED) received small grants from ICLARM. Ford Foundation also separately provided grants to three other NGOs: Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS) to develop community based fish habitat restoration; FemCom to produce video and audio materials on fishery management and CBFM; and Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) to review the legal and regulatory framework for fisheries. All three have co-operated with DOF and ICLARM in their activities (Technical Assistance Project Proforma, January 2001, CBFM-2, page-2).

COMMUNITY- BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT (CBFM) PHASE-1

The CBFM-1 project was initiated in late 1995 and continued to July 1999. It worked in 19 widely scattered waterbodies (10 rivers and 9 beels and baors). The basis was that sustainable use of these resources can only be achieved where user communities are active participants in their management. The project worked to empower fishing communities to become co-managers of these fisheries, and to ensure a more equitable distribution of benefits from fishing (Technical Assistance Project Proforma, January 2001, CBFM-2, page-2).

A Government of Bangladesh (GOB) evaluation in 1999 recommended a second phase that would continue and expand the earlier work and ensure community access to jalmaohals for ten years. Accordingly, this project has been designed and secured funding from Department for International Development (DFID) of UK Government for five years from September 2001.

NGOs involved with CBFM-1 are also involved with CBFM-2 and have been implementing CBFM phase 2 activities since September, 2001. According to the plan, the project also included 3 more new smaller NGOs in the middle of 2002 to work with this project as partners. Currently, 11 different partner NGOs are working with the CBFM-2 project for the implementation of its activities.

COMMUNITY- BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT (CBFM) PHASE-2

The goal of the CBFM-2 project is to sustainably improve the livelihoods of poor people dependent on aquatic resources through the adoption of improved inland fisheries management policies resulting in more sustainable, equitable and participatory management of these resources. The project has been doing this by developing and testing a range of 'models' and assessing their impacts and sustainability. It is also developing ways of linking and co-ordinating local CBFM across connected fisheries and wetlands (river-floodplains-beel). The findings are being used to inform and influence fisheries policy stakeholders with the aim of expanding adoption of successful models and improving the policy formulation process.

PARTNER NGOS (PNGOs) OF CBFM-2 PROJECT

In CBFM-2 project, there are 11 partner NGOs of bigger, medium and smaller types, working in 19 out of 64 districts of Bangladesh to implement the community-based fisheries resources management project activities.

BACKGROUND TO THE EMERGENCE OF NGOS IN BANGLADESH

NGOs in Bangladesh mostly emerged in 1972, after the liberation war, with the emergency relief operations and rehabilitation activities with the assistance provided by the donor agencies. Of these, BRAC, Proshika Human Development Center and Association of Social Advancement (ASA) are prominent. It should also be mentioned here that Grameen Bank is another important player in Bangladesh who also have been playing a vital role in the country in micro-credit operations after the liberation of Bangladesh, although it is not a NGO, but a Development Financing Institution (DFI).

In Bangladesh, the numbers of NGOs are huge. In Asia, Bangladesh alone is the home of 13,000 NGOs (i.e. registered with the government under the Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies Ordinance of 1961) (Task Force Report, 1991 and Sarker, Johnny M. 1991, p-4). But the numbers of NGOs, who are receiving foreign grant funds through the NGO Affairs Bureau of the GoB, are only 1,875 (as of June 2004). Of these, 1,691 are local NGOs, i.e. Bangladeshi NGOs, and 184 are foreign NGOs. These NGOs are implementing a total of 10,128 different developmental projects in the country with an approved grant of Tk. 210,015,766,636.76, which is equivalent to US \$ 368,487,133.98. (Source: An Unpublished Statistical Report of NGO Affairs Bureau, 2004, Prime Minister's Office, GoB).

As mentioned earlier in this report, that in Bangladesh from the traditional times NGOs have been mostly involved in micro-credit operations, but only some selected NGOs are involved in natural resources management.

In an analysis of the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB - the Apex Coordinating Body of NGOs in Bangladesh) listed 591 NGOs (Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh -ADAB's Directory of NGOs in Bangladesh, Ready Reference – 2000), it was found that only 326 (i.e. 55%), out of 591 NGOs, have fisheries programmes, while 506 (i.e.86%) NGOs have micro-credit programmes. The following table (Table-1) will make it clearer:

Table-1: Particulars of ADAB listed NGOs in different programmes

Particulars	Number	Percent (%)
Total no. of NGOs	591	100
NGOs involved in Fisheries programmes	326	55
NGOs involved in Micro-credit programmes	506	86
NGOs involved in Gender and Development programmes	360	61

Source: ADAB's Directory of NGOs in Bangladesh, Ready Reference – 2000

ROLES OF NGOS IN OPEN WATER FISHERIES RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The roles of NGOs in the fisheries sector, especially in the open water fisheries resource management in Bangladesh is vital in many ways. The following figure (Figure-1) produced by the Fisheries Sector Review makes it clearer about this statement.

FIGURE-1: KEY INSTITUTIONS IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR.

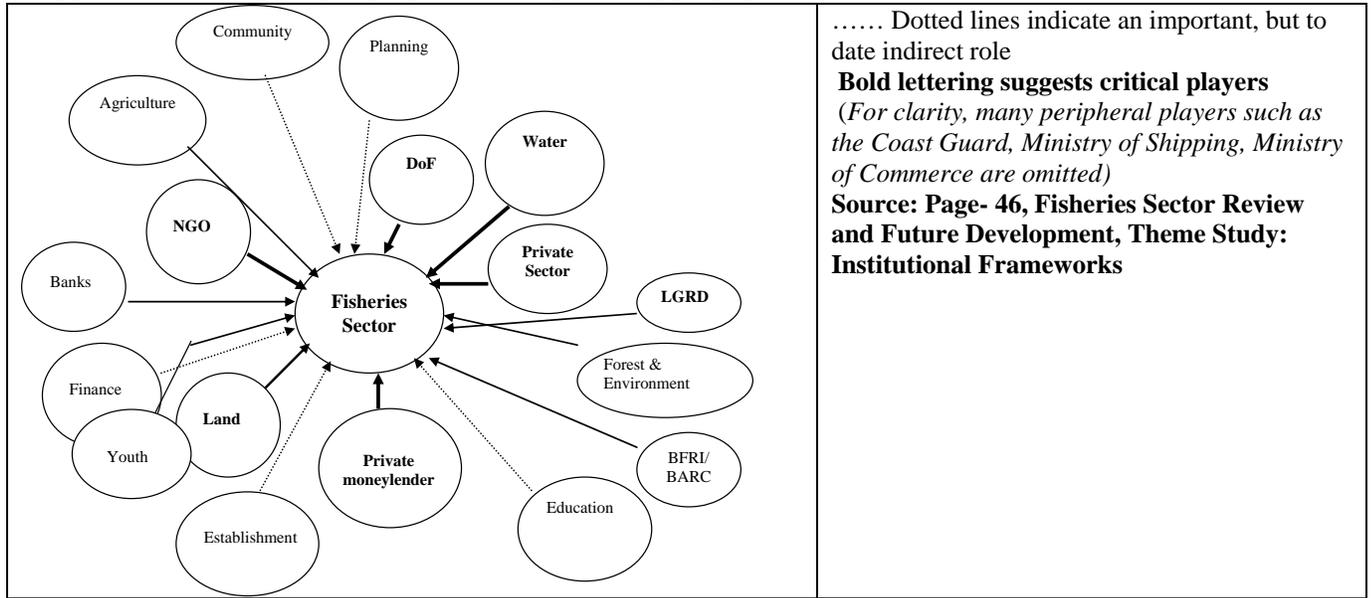


Figure-1 indicates that more than twenty institutions have a prominent role in the fisheries sector. Of these at least ten have a major direct role to play (Page-45, Fisheries Sector Review and Future Development, Theme Study: Institutional Frameworks). Among the key players, the roles of NGOs are also remarkable and critical in the development of fisheries sector, especially in the open water fisheries resources management.

Although the NGOs involved in the open water fisheries sector are smaller in number, but they are playing vital roles in the open water fisheries resources management in Bangladesh.

The major roles are highlighted below:

MOBILISATION AND STRENGTHENING OF FISHING COMMUNITIES AND WIDER COMMUNITIES

Under this, PNGOs are organizing the poor fishers and wetland user communities in and around the water bodies and forming them into groups as male, female and mixed. Different criteria are followed by the PNGOs in forming groups. The objectives of group formations are for the sustainable management of fishery resources and for building the community level institutions. These groups are supported with literacy and training on consciousness and awareness raising, credit facilities and assist the fishers’ community to develop institutions and techniques for managing the open water fisheries resources. The groups generally meet once a week for discussing their activities, problems, savings status, fisheries management and other raised issues to solve those independently. The status of AIGAs and their achievements are also discussed in such meetings.

Ensure Equitable Access to Fishery Resources

One of the major roles of the PNGOs in the open water fisheries sector is to ensure that available fishery resources have an equal stake by all levels of participating peoples of the community, including the full time and part time fishers. This is the most important task for the PNGOs to ensure as most of these resources have been controlled by the influential persons and elites of the community, those who have strong linkages with the power sources.

Facilitate the Networking and Liaison Functions Between the Service Providers and Communities

Another major role of the PNGOs in the open water fisheries resources management is to establish networking and linkages between the local service providers and the respective communities at the local level. This linking of local level management is being done by the respective development project staff assigned by the PNGOs along with the respective Beel Management Committee (BMC)/River Management Committee (RMC) members. The respective PNGO staff members try to ensure contacts by the BMCs/RMCs with the local level, especially with the Upazilla Fishery Officer (UFO), Upazilla Nirbahi Officer (UNO), Assistant Commissioner (Land), DoF Farm Manager (if available), etc. in order to form fisher groups, organizing committee meeting, formation of fishers groups, and problems with the local influentials/elites, including political leaders.

Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building

The institutional strengthening and capacity building parts are mainly done through training and workshop. Knowledge and skills of the assigned staff and project beneficiaries are very much important for reaching the goals and attaining the sustainability of any management, including the fisheries management in the canals, flowing rivers, closed WBs, semi-closed WBs, flood-plains, etc. Generally, the following types of trainings are facilitated for the staff and the project beneficiary groups:

- Orientation on the overall activity;
- Development allies;
- Awareness raising;
- Leadership and management;
- Simple accounts keeping;
- Gender and development;
- Open water fisheries resources management technical training;
- Bio-Diversity and environmental management;
- Health and sanitation;
- Professional skill development;
- Community awareness development.

Alternative Income Generating Activities (AIGAs)

The PNGOs of CBFM-2 project generally provides two types of credit funds. One is revolving loan fund (RLF) for WB management for groups, which is interest free and micro-credit for IGAs of individual loans with 12% interest per annum. For IGAs, credits supports are generally provided to the beneficiaries to reduce fishers' dependency on the traditional money lenders and to compensate lose of income during any closed seasons established by the fishing communities. These micro-credit operations also helped the beneficiaries to improve their socio-economic conditions, creating employment opportunities, and increasing family income. The number of beneficiaries, which each of these 6 PNGOs is directly involved in the water body areas or floodplains are to ensure livelihoods, self-employment opportunities and IGAs. In CBFM-2 project, as of March, 2004, an amount of Tk. 7,870,000 (against the target of Tk. 15,250,000 for the CBFM-2 Project) has been disbursed to 2,915 Project beneficiaries.

Fishery Management

Under the fishery management activities of the open water fisheries, the following items are important:

- Establishment of sanctuary in open water fisheries;
- Banning of fishing during breeding season;
- Restriction of harmful gears use;
- Stocking fish.

METHODS USED BY PNGOS IN MANAGING OPEN WATER FISHERIES RESOURCES

If we cite the example of Community Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) Project of WorldFish Center, then we found that several approaches and models have been developed by the project PNGOs to community based fisheries management and institutional arrangements at the WB levels. These are described below:

Approaches to Community Based Fisheries Management and Institutional Arrangements

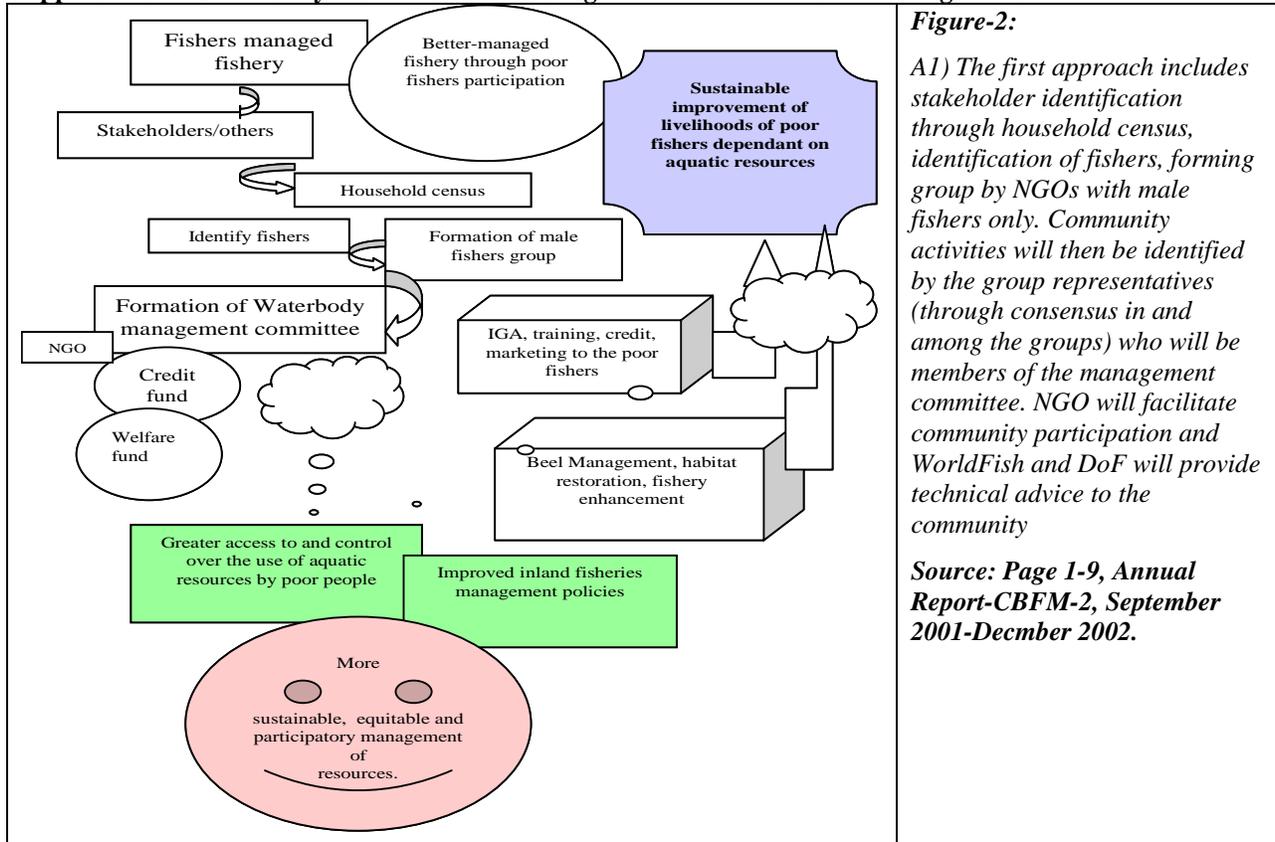


Figure-2:

A1) The first approach includes stakeholder identification through household census, identification of fishers, forming group by NGOs with male fishers only. Community activities will then be identified by the group representatives (through consensus in and among the groups) who will be members of the management committee. NGO will facilitate community participation and WorldFish and DoF will provide technical advice to the community

Source: Page 1-9, Annual Report-CBFM-2, September 2001-December 2002.

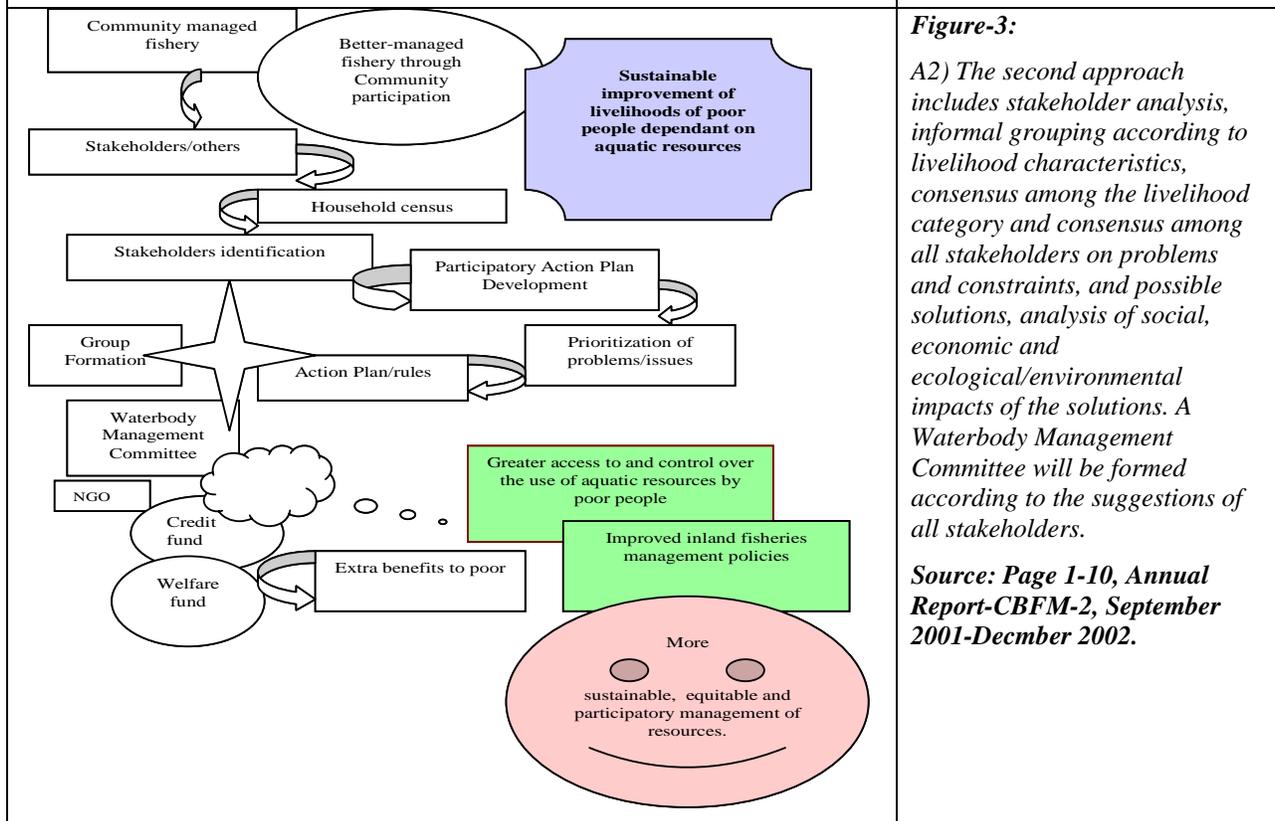
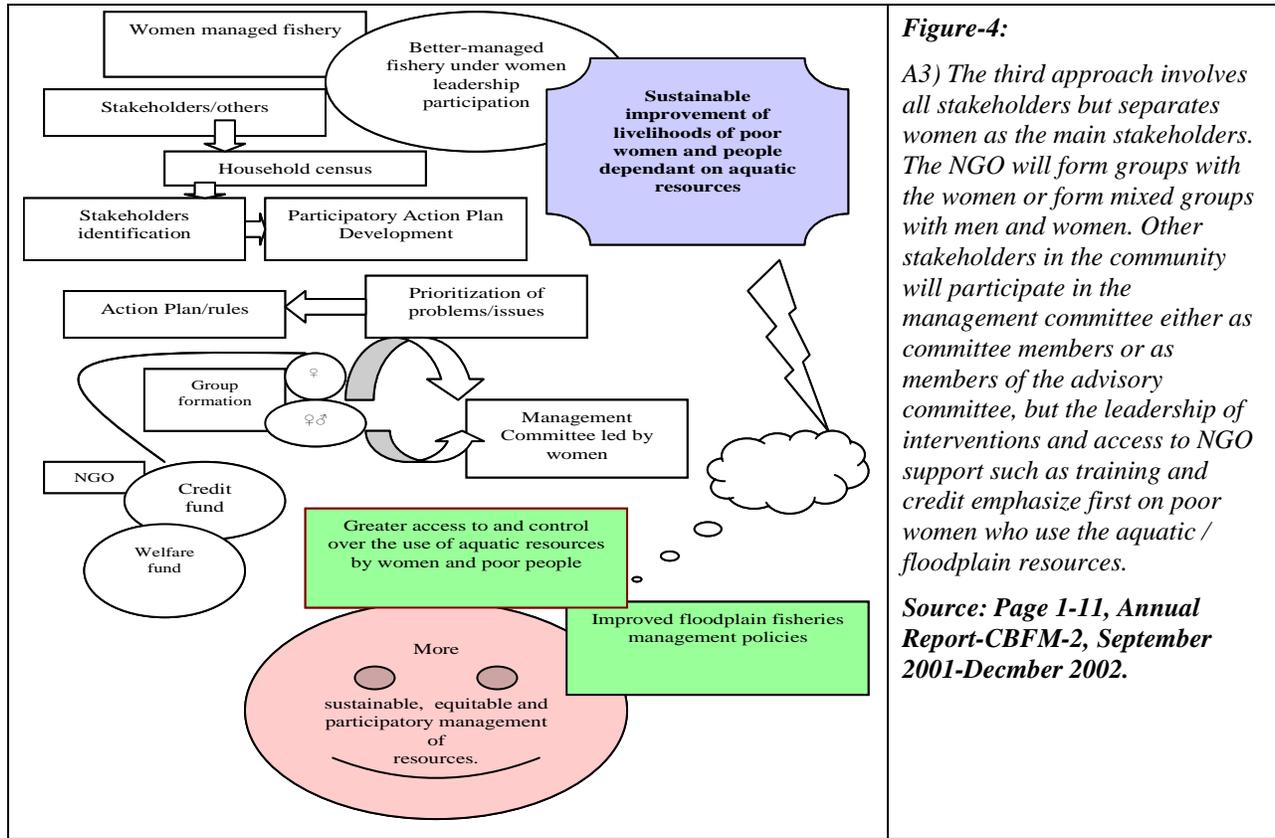


Figure-3:

A2) The second approach includes stakeholder analysis, informal grouping according to livelihood characteristics, consensus among the livelihood category and consensus among all stakeholders on problems and constraints, and possible solutions, analysis of social, economic and ecological/environmental impacts of the solutions. A Waterbody Management Committee will be formed according to the suggestions of all stakeholders.

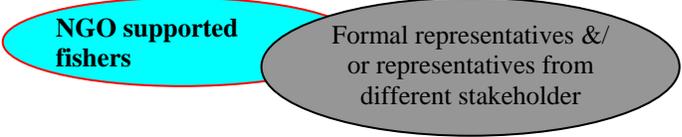
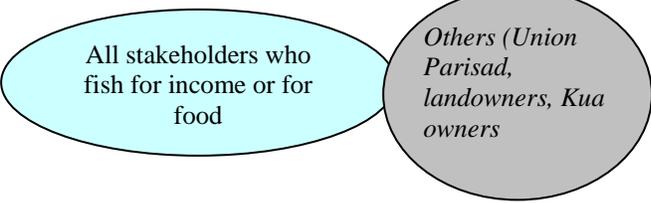
Source: Page 1-10, Annual Report-CBFM-2, September 2001-December 2002.



Models of community based organisation at waterbody level

For better management of fisheries, some institutions needed to be developed which in the long run will establish themselves as a recognized institutions for local fishery management. Which model(s) will be followed depends on the local situation, local needs and types of constraint. The selection of the model will be completely participatory. The concerned NGO with advice/help from DoF and WorldFish Center will assist villagers to form the committee. The number of committee members and types of members (composition of the committee) will be decided in the general meeting or during a participatory action plan development (PAPD) process. Here we outline some of the models currently being followed, but these are only some of the possible arrangements.

	<p>Model1) In the first model NGO will form groups with only fishers who fish for income but are poor. Management committee will include NGO supported full time fishers only. Other NGO members may join the committee if the fishers wanted to involve them.</p>
	<p>Model2) In the second model all types of fishers can participate in the management committee. Other stakeholders may form an Advisory Committee to support management committee. The Advisory Committee will typically include local influentials and elites and NGO coordinator/ fieldworker.</p>

	<p><i>Model3) The third model includes NGO supported fishers but formal representation of the DoF, Local Government official, NGO and WorldFish Center will be included to support the fishers representatives.</i></p>
	<p><i>Model4) Fourth model includes NGO supported fishers and other fishers who decided not to join NGO. These are the groups who fish for income.</i></p>
	<p><i>Model5) The fifth model includes representatives from all types of stakeholders groups. A shadow committee including Union Parisad chairman, representatives of landowners and Kua owners will also be formed. This model will be applicable for floodplain.</i></p>
	<p><i>Model 6) The sixth model includes a Beel Management Committee (BMC) formed by NGO supported leases who pay revenue for the waterbody and stock fish for income. The beel area shrinks during dry season and the people who enjoy the surrounding land often engage in conflict with the leases. It is better to have a shadow committee to manage the support the BMC. This model will be applicable for closed waterbodies.</i></p>
	<p><i>Model7) The last model includes only NGO supported fulltime fishers only. This model will be applicable for the closed jalmahals where fishers have exclusive rights and in rivers where poor fishers have very little access rights.</i></p>

Source: Pages 1-12 and 1-13, Annual Report, CBFM-2, September 2001-December 2002.

IMPACTS OF CBFM PROJECTS

Impacts of CBFM-1 Project

Under CBFM local people, particularly participant fishers, from all the beels and from one river feel they can participate more and have significantly more influence over fishery related decisions than before, and that the state of the resource and their knowledge of how to manage it have been improved. Fishing communities have demonstrated that they can be responsible for fisheries and improve their management, given the right institutional recognition and support (Thompson, Paul M. 2004, CBFM-2 Working Paper 11, Impacts of the Community Based Fisheries Management Project Phase 1, WorldFish Center, Page-iii).

The following table (Table-2) summarises some of the outcomes of CBFM-1 by type of waterbody:

Table-2: Outcomes of CBFM-1 by waterbody type

Attribute	Closed beel/baor (6)	Open beel (3)	River (10)
Fisher incomes, assets and equity	Some increase associated with improved stocking, but costs of lease and stocking high in one site. Major improvement in equity – equal sharing of costs and benefits among participants, non-participants excluded.	Some improvements through increased catches and additional income sources supported by NGO credit. Effort and catch depend on gear and individual interest, but fish sanctuaries seen as equitable.	Mixed, some improvements, but in most rivers any change in overall incomes due to non-fishing sources and in some rivers fishing incomes probably falling due to increasing competition for fish.
Empowerment and decision making (representation)	All fishers with fishing rights in 5, but subsistence fishers and land owners around waterbodies not represented.	All fishers with fishing rights represented, but subsistence fishers and land owners around only one waterbody represented.	All fishers and fishery stakeholders invited to committees but not function. No clear mechanism for choice of representatives.
Empowerment and decision making (transparency)	Regular meetings, record keeping and accounts not yet so well maintained by BMCs, but members awareness increasing.	Regular meetings, in one site local workshop to decide on main rules.	Limited, meetings held but decisions not enforceable and no clear representational arrangement to provide feedback.
Fish catches (sustainability)	Stocking-based component not yet financially viable in one, capture component open to fluctuations.	Fish catches increased in two beels following conservation measures.	No clear trend, but increasing numbers of brushpiles (<i>katas</i>) in some rivers due to open access.
Efficiency: compliance and enforcement	Closed seasons enforced by fishers, some poaching when local conflicts arose or status was uncertain at end of project funding.	Closed seasons and fish sanctuaries complied with. Some outsiders fish, fishers accept subsistence fishing by poor.	Katas increasing, weak enforcement by DoF against this. Fishers and RMC achieved some compliance in 2 rivers (one strong RMC, one under NFMP).
Conflicts and limiting factors	Two sites dropped due to external pressure of powerful groups and local conflicts.	All sites continued, less progress in the site with external pressure to capture the resource.	Two sites dropped (and one later) due to lack of institutional support and participation by the fishers, only one showed clear success due to lack of conflicts, use rights being secured by the fishers (leased) and government support.

Source: Thompson, Paul M. 2004, CBFM-2 Working Paper 11, Page – iv, Impacts of CBFM Project Phase 1, Impacts of CBFM-2 Project

Improvement of Inland Fisheries Management

Poor fishers gained control over 115 waterbodies covering an official area of 5,940 ha (Dry season area 4,403 ha and monsoon area 16,485 ha) during the course of Community based Fisheries Management-2 (CBFM-2) project implementation since September 2001 and they are ensuring their livelihoods through sustainable management of these resources.

Capacity Building of Project Beneficiaries

Extensive training were provided to 3,200 beneficiaries by 11 NGO partners of CBFM-2 project water body areas for improved management of the water bodies, and another 501 participants (GO and NGO staff) received technical training on open water fisheries management.

Increase in average yield per acre

Average yield/ha has been raised from 300 kgs to over 600 kgs in semi-closed waterbody under CBFM-2 project.

Improvement in fishing community empowerment, fisheries management and equity

In CBFM-2 project, WorldFish Center promoted sustainable use of openwater fisheries resources and user community participation in their management and in projects sites it improve fishing community empowerment, fisheries management, and equity in distribution of benefits.

Capacity Building of Project Staff

In CBFM-2 project all 200 staff have been trained on different subjects in order to develop their skills and capacity to address the issues raised in the Project from time to time. The following table (Table-3) will provide the status of training held during 2002.

Table-3: Staff training held during 2002

Sl. No	Name of the course	Participants	Duration
WorldFish Center organised			
1.	Group formation	25 NGO staff	One week
2.	PAPD	4 NGO coordinators	One week
3.	Entrepreneurship development	8 NGO staff	5 days
4.	Structure of BMC/RMC	8 NGO coordinators and senior staff of DOF	1 day
5.	Legal Issues	8 NGO coordinators and senior DOF staff	1 day
6.	Orientation on CBFM2	CRED staff	1 day
DOF organized training			
9.	Organizational management in implementing CBFM2	75 SUFOs, UFOS, AFOs (DOF), 88 NGO staff	2 days
10.	Social analysis and development for development allies (trainers' training)	5 DOF, 9 NGO staff (pilot with 16 target allies)	3 days
BRAC organized			
12.	Group formation	11 NGO workers	5 days
13.	Communication skill development	20 NGO workers	5 days
CNRS organized			
14.	TOT on wetland resource development	8 NGO workers	2 days
15.	Staff orientation on CBFM2	22 NGO workers	2 days
16.	PM&E	6 NGO workers	5 days
17.	PAPD	11 NGO workers	8 days
18.	Orientation on catch assessment survey	5 NGO workers	2 days
19.	Orientation on household baseline survey	9 NGO workers	2 days
Banchte Shekha organised			
20.	Staff orientation	10 NGO workers	5 days
Proshika Organised			
21.	CBFM2 programme orientation	28 NGO workers	1 day
Caritas Organised			
22.	Staff orientation training	22 NGO workers	5 days
23.	Development orientation training	8 NGO workers	5 days

Source: Page 12-6, Annual Report, CBFM-2, September 2001-December 2002.

CHALLENGES OF PNGOS IN OPEN WATER FISHERIES RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Lack of complete understanding on the range of activities

Most NGOs, especially the small ones, do not fully understand the range of their activities. In other words, they do not understand their Terms of References (ToRs). They are unable to deliver services of acceptable quality even after receiving extra written guidelines and instructions from the Project and after being briefed more than once by the Technical Assistant (TA) consultants (Saleha, 2001, page-11).

Lack of adequate skills in report writing

Reporting quality of all NGOs is not fully satisfactory. This problem is more severe with some of the small NGOs. Not much has been achieved on this issue even after advising them to rewrite reports with written feedback and face to face discussion. They simply do not have the ability to grasp the issues they need to report on. In a nutshell, small NGOs lack skills of report writing and large NGOs do not put the time required for producing useful reports (Saleha, 2001, page-11).

Sustainability of NGOs

It is really important to see whether PNGOs will sustain their activities in CBFM-2 project, even after the withdrawal of support from the project in August 2006. In most cases, PNGOs have only the ad-hoc plans and they don't have an exit plan as yet. They are not sure how they can run their activities later on without an outside funding support. This is a major issue in all community based projects.

Capacity Development of Staff

In some cases, staff capacity is not adequate enough to run the project activities without technical guidelines and regular supervision from WorldFish Center and DOF. This point is also crucial to address.

Lack of adequate funds:

PNGOs are often unable to plan for longer-term activities, as they often depend on short-term funding from donors, (2-5) years.

Frequent Staff Turn Over:

Drop out of the trained staff in the middle of project implementation from the PNGOs is a big problem. Recently, two out of 13 project coordinators of CBFM-2 and CBFM-SSEA projects resigned from the respective PNGOs and joined in other organizations with enhanced benefits.

Power Conflicts:

At the groups and management committee levels, sometimes conflicts arose and for which the activities are affected.

CBO Networking:

The networks of CBOs are not still well-organized in the open water fisheries sector to address different problems at their own.

Political Influence:

The influence of local representatives, starting from UP Chairmen, Members, Parliament Members and other locally influential and elites are highly important to address the open water fisheries sector problems. These influences are making the expected achievements in jeopardize conditions.

Lack of Follow-up and Monitoring:

The regular monitoring and follow-ups are also crucial in this sector, but this is not efficient enough to handle these problems.

Lack of mainstreaming Gender in CBFM-2 project:

- **Participation:** Although women and children are a part of the community, women are not considered as a part of fisheries management teams or organizations at grassroots level. Most of the NGOs form groups but their activities are restricted to skill training, group based training, credit for income generating activities, and weekly savings (Parvin-2003, page-36).
- **Capacity building:** Women are members of the management committee in some CBOs, However, they do not participate in the discussion or they are not given any chance to participate. Even when they participate their opinions are ignored. They do not have leadership/bargaining capacity (Parvin-2003, page-37)".
- **Awareness on resource management:** Women have very little exposure to other areas, CBFM activities or other NGO activities. They have very little knowledge about CBFM. They do not know the objectives of the project. As they are not involved in the fishery activities directly, some NGOs do not bother to explain the project activities to them. They only know group meeting, saving and credit. No training so far been conducted for women by the PNGOs on the project activities (Parvin-2003, page-38).
- **Alternative Income Generating Activities (AIGAs):** Most of the AIG activities are very traditional and women complained that they are making very little out of their activities after paying interest, specially the poor who has to manage installments out of their limited daily income. There is very little follow-up of the training and IGA activities (Parvin-2003, page-38).
- **Role of women in resource management:** Women are still concerned about the fisheries management. They welcome all the local rules that the management committees set and also mentioned that the local people have 100% compliance to those rules. They are concerned that fishes are decreasing, diversity is being lost and fish diseases are not controlled (Parvin-2003, page-39).

- **Sustainability:** It is difficult to prescribe something for all types of WBs, all types of communities and all types of situation. Sustainability depends on the ownership development, group cohesion, interest and cost-benefit sharing mechanism. The usual suggestions include development of fun, group activities, leadership capacity, government recognition and institutional rules (Parvin-2003, page-40).
- **Staff:** At present in CBFM-2 project very few women are working as staff. At local level, women are working as field monitors, but not as regular field level organizers. Women staff are not assigned to work with the women groups so much, and few eligible female candidates for jobs (Parvin-2003, page-36).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Several areas have been identified in this report for further improvements in the open water fisheries resources management, but various positive impacts have already been visible. For example, improvement of inland fisheries management through the management of 115 WBs in CBFM-2 project, providing livelihoods, employment and IGA opportunities for over 20,000 poorer households, social mobilization, women empowerment, social awareness raising, and in particular assisting and facilitating access of organized groups of poor fishers to decision making over the WBs. However, many challenges are still there in developing the capacity of PNGOs to sustainably improve the livelihoods of poor people in CBFM project. Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations can easily be made for better improvement of the open water fisheries resources management in Bangladesh:

- The PNGOs involved in the open water fisheries resources sector need to strengthen their capacity in understanding the whole dynamics of capture fisheries of Bangladesh and its strategy for development;
- The duration of each development project period should be extended from 5 years to 7 years, so that the project activities are sustained for longer times, even after the withdrawal of financial support from the Project;
- The PNGOs need to provide adequate short-term and long-term training to their staff to enhance skills, attitude and knowledge;
- The PNGOs need to provide enough support to establish effective communications and coordinations among the key players at all levels in the open water fisheries sector in order to bring transparency and accountability;
- More women participants and staff need to be attracted by the PNGOs in their planning for inclusion in the project activities;
- More allies training need to be organized for the associated community people to raise their awareness about the natural resources around their community and its controlling mechanisms;
- To ensure female participation in fisheries management, NGOs should have a strategy based on discussion with the CBFM group/committee on how they can involve women in the fisheries activities (Parvin-2003, page-36);
- Leadership training should be provided to all members of the group. NGO should make a guideline for the leadership with their help. Leadership should be rotated among all the members and members should then select those for participating in the bigger forum (e.g. BMC/RMC) who are capable to participate (represent them) in the management body (Parvin-2003, page-37);
- A clear strategy for reaching the poor fishers during ban period/closed period for credit operations should be prepared by each NGO before the next ban period (Parvin – 2003, page-39).

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